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# TRAINRIDER

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THE NEWSLETTER OF *TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST*



## Chairman's Update

Well, LD 2019 was passed by the Maine Senate on April 18<sup>th</sup> as you will read on our front page. Did we have anything to do with it? We like to think so.

The Bill was introduced by Representative Boyd Marley, long time board member of TrainRiders Northeast. After passage by the House and the Senate, the bill stopped off at the Appropriations Committee, where Senate President Beth Edmonds, Representative David Webster and others worked to get the necessary votes for approval. As the day wore on, Governor Baldacci and Jane Lincoln, his Chief of Staff became more visible and vocal in their support for the bill, which resulted in the bill being "exempted" by the Appropriations Committee and sent directly to the Senate for enactment, which was accomplished at 7:32 PM that evening. We know that it was Governor Baldacci's strong endorsement and the unflinching support of Senate President Edmonds that pulled all the pieces together for success.

Did we help? Again we like to think so.

(See **UPDATE** Page 3)

## WE'RE GOING TO BRUNSWICK!

The Maine Legislature has approved an amended rail-funding bill to expand passenger rail service from Portland to Brunswick and open up connections to Rockland, Lewiston-Auburn and points north and west.

The Senate vote, which was made without a roll call, came after an 89-50 approval in the House on April 4.

Known as LD 2019, "An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Passenger Rail Funding," the bill made its way to the Appropriations Committee for final authorization on Friday, April 18.

Senate President Beth Edmonds said, "The issue that everyone has to remember is that although there is a focus on passenger service, equally important is the freight railway connection. If you get to Brunswick, that's a nexus point for going to Rockland and beyond and to getting to Augusta. On the way to Brunswick, you get to Yarmouth Junction, which connects you to Lewiston-Auburn and beyond. It's a key piece of rail that makes a lot of connections."

Edmonds called the Brunswick-Portland rail a connector to a "whole bunch of other places, and ultimately those connections are not only passenger, but also freight connections. We as a state need those freight connections for the paper industry and for all the other industries we have upcountry to get those goods to market," she said.

Citing the high diesel fuel prices that are crippling the trucking industry, Edmonds said the state needs more transportation options, not fewer. "And there are many environmental reasons why one would choose rail," she said. "It uses less land, carries as many passengers as 16 lanes of highway, and it's three times more fuel-efficient than trucks. All those issues can't be ignored."

The amended bill LD 2019 sets up the funding mechanism for the State Transit, Aviation and Rail, or STAR, Transportation Fund and outlines disbursement.

The amendment, adopted April 2, changes the funding from a percentage of sales and use revenue to a more definitive source of funding.

(See **LD 2019** Page 3)



When board member at large Charlie Brown died last November at age 62, everyone who knew him was taken by grief. As a man wheelchair-bound due to muscular dystrophy, he devoted his life to serving the public interest. He did it with a particular zest, and he had a way of making people around him happy. (See TNE newsletter of autumn, 2002 for a profile of Charlie.)

But Charlie himself was happy; he was married to the former Jan McEwen, who is herself an extraordinary person. The couple met after she graduated from the University of CA at Berkeley and, as one of the founders of the Center for Independent Living in that city, happened to give him a tour of the place. The center focused on needs such as transit, accessible wheelchair repair, housing, standards for buildings, elevators and other matters of daily concern to the handicapped.

Jan, who has been blind from birth, is a musician who plays the mandolin and specializes in Celtic and old time Appalachian music. She has one master's degree in history and another one in psychology and counseling. The facility that she helped found has now spread all over the country and enlarged its scope to cover every disability.

But back to 1974 when the young Jan gave the young Charlie a tour of the center. He left only to show up again several days later. "He came in," said Jan, in a phone call from her home in San Anselmo, CA last month, and asked, "What do you guys need doing around here?" He got the job, and they were married two years later.

Both young people were native Californians, Charlie from Pasadena and Jan from Berkeley. But, she said, "We kept taking trips to Maine, and finally we said, "Why not move to Maine?" By 1981 they found themselves living in Camden, within walking distance of everything the town has to offer.

Charlie was keenly interested in transit and in architectural barrier compliancy for the handicapped. "He loved trains since the age of seven," said Jan. "He used to build models, and later he became involved in a scenic excursion railroad in Colorado." She added, "His ashes went up the chimney of the locomotive - rather, *half* his ashes. The rest are going to Maine, to be buried in a plot in Camden close to where we used to live."

Jan flew into Boston with her mother, her goddaughter, and her guide dog Addie on April 29, and after an overnight they met Board members of TrainRiders Northeast, who rode back to Portland with them in a reserved coach. As the train entered Maine, the engineer saluted Charlie with one long blast of the horn. A lunch from the new summer menu was enjoyed en route.

Charlie's ashes also rode the train. "He always wanted to ride the Downeaster, and now he will," said Jan. She was eager, herself, to make the trip, but on two occasions in the past when opportunity presented itself, Charlie's health was unstable.

We could not be more pleased that in April Charlie rode the Downeaster in spirit and Jan in person. During the past 20 years this very special couple has donated time and funding. Specifically, they have paid close to \$100,000 worth of TrainRiders office rent and "whatever" for 10 years. They bought a replacement car for our chairman so he could continue his unrelenting trips around Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont to address civic groups, and to attend an endless number of meetings at the State House in Augusta.

The Browns provided the first office computer; they gave Wayne a railroad pocket watch with his initials and engraved *To Wayne E Davis, A True Railroader, with respect and affection, Charles and Jan Brown*. They also presented him with a gavel that he has never failed to bang at our annual meetings.

They remained generous friends despite a return to California in 1994 after Charlie's condition deteriorated to the point that he could no longer go outdoors in winter. Until they left Camden, he attended every board meeting of TrainRiders, driving down with the late Fourtin Powell.

The Browns returned to the Bay Area to a house that, like the one in the other coastal bay town, is walking distance to center village. It borders a tidal creek with a little footbridge that leads right to all the shops. Revealing her Celtic folklore side, Jan advised you have to be careful of trolls when crossing the bridge.

Jan now works at Catholic Charities as a case manager for homeless families. She commutes an hour and a half by bus with her latest guide dog, a yellow Lab named Addie. Before Addie, she was led by a big dog, who had been given the odd name of Metric by his trainers. Charlie and Jan altered it to Met, also Metty and Spaghetti. "He retired at the age of nine," she said. "He didn't want to do it anymore." She added, "Metty was a deep old soul." He is now cozy with his original trainers.

Charlie's memorial was held at graveside in Camden on May 2. There were special readings and music performed by guitarists, who accompanied Jan on her mandolin.

"Charlie lived well, and he died well," she said, "and I write him letters almost every day. He was my best friend."

We were not the only recipients of his kindness. He supported the local soup kitchen and even purchased the Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church bell that rang during his service. We'll not soon forget Charlie.

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Regretfully, Jan was unable to remain in Maine to attend our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual meeting. She and Addie had to get back to work.

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**(UPDATE Cont'd from Page 1)**

We've been promoting service to Freeport and Brunswick from Portland for the past twenty years - it is one of our original goals.

Since the arrival of our greatest accomplishment - Amtrak's Downeaster, in 2001, we've become more vocal about expanding the Downeaster to Freeport and Brunswick in just about every type of media possible. The seat that TNE had on the Governor's Rail Task Force gave us the opportunity to work with Maine citizens and business leaders appointed to the Committee by the Governor. Those contacts led us to begin our most recent outreach to our elected officials north and west of Portland to help familiarize them with the economic success that follows investment in passenger rail. Last summer, while the Legislature was in recess, we began calling on members of the Legislative Leadership by phone, U.S. Mail and email as well as making visits to their homes or places of business (by appointment of course). We added luncheons and shared video presentations with Patricia Douglas, the Executive Director of NNEPRA and had three mass mailings to all members of the Legislature. We sent legislative invitations to complimentary breakfasts - thanks to the support of Kathyne Weare of the Cliff House and Nancy Gray of the Harraseeket Inn. Senate President Edmonds and Rail Authority Executive Director Patricia Quinn were present at all events. When the Legislature reconvened, we distributed letters and flyers to the public and ultimately passed out over 1,300 flyers to passengers on the Downeaster trains asking them to contact their legislators.

We used a lot of our limited resources and certainly a lot of our energy and emotion in the effort, and at the end of the day - the bill did pass - which is the important thing.

Special thanks to everyone who responded to our requests and helped us accomplish another one of our goals. Yes, the trains really will run to Freeport and Brunswick - within two years - if everyone does as they've promised. Next effort - the permanent funding for Amtrak's Downeaster. Stick with us - there's still work to do.

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**(LD 2019 Cont'd from Page 1)**

The plan proposes to assign funds from taxation of car rentals beginning in fiscal year 2010 to help pay for the STAR Transportation Fund to support transit, aeronautics and rail transportation, including the Downeaster train service.

The fiscal note on the amendment projects revenues of which about \$2.5 million annually would pay interest on a federal Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing, or RRIF program, loan covering the expense of upgrading the passenger rail route from Portland to Brunswick. The remaining \$500,000 ± annually in the STAR Transportation Fund would support other transit, aeronautics and rail transportation.

The total cost to refurbish the roughly 28 miles of Pan Am Railways-owned track is estimated at \$31.5 million, according to Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Portland-based Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. Quinn said she hoped passenger trains would be operating north of Portland in 2010.

The Downeaster's federal operating fund ends July 1, 2009. "This particular bill is not for operations," Quinn said of LD 2019. "It's for

capital funds for track rehabilitation." She said Gov. John Baldacci has made a commitment to include the operations funding for FY 2010 in his supplemental budget.

Quinn added, "The ability to serve the redevelopment of Brunswick Naval Air Station is another important piece for upgrading the track between Brunswick and Portland."

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**Railroads roar ahead as fuel costs rise**

The freight railway industry is enjoying its biggest building boom in nearly a century, a turnaround as abrupt as it is ambitious. It is largely fueled by growing global trade and rising fuel costs for 18-wheelers. In 2002, the major railroads laid off 4,700 workers; in 2006, they hired more than 5,000. Profit has doubled industry-wide since 2003, and stock prices have soared. The value of the largest railroad, the Union Pacific, has tripled since 2001.

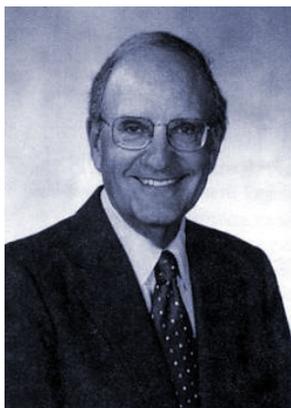
This year alone, the railroads will spend nearly \$10 billion to add track, build switchyards and terminals, and open tunnels to handle the coming flood of traffic. Freight rail tonnage will rise nearly 90 percent by 2035, according to the Transportation Department.

The changing global market has fueled prosperity - and the need to add track for the first time in 80 years. Soaring diesel prices and a driver shortage have pushed freight from 18-wheelers back onto the rails. At the same time, China's unquenchable appetite for coal and the escalating U.S. demand for Chinese goods, means more U.S. rail traffic is heading to ports in the Northwest, on its way to and from the Far East.

Excerpted from the Washington Post

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## TrainRiders Northeast's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting



Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at the Marriott  
Sable Oaks 5:30 - 9:00 PM.

Our honored guest will be former Maine  
Senator George Mitchell, a "Founding Father"  
of the Downeaster

Registration, cocktails & hors d'oeuvres begin  
at 5:30 PM. Tickets are \$50 per person.



Senator George J. Mitchell served as a United States Senator from Maine from 1980 to 1995, and was Senate Majority Leader from 1989 to 1995. He also served as Chairman of the Peace Negotiations in Northern Ireland and the International Fact-Finding Committee on Violence in the Middle East. During his tenure at the Senate, he championed legislation that brought passenger rail service to Northern New England.

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### ***THE TRAINRIDER***

Box 4869, Downtown Station  
Portland, ME 04112

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